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House Approves USA PATRIOT Act

Bill Will Help Strengthen National Security

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. House of Representatives has approved reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act, legislation that improves the ability of the U.S. Intelligence Community and law enforcement to protect domestic security.

“Today we have continued to give our investigators the tools they need to track, find and stop foreign terrorists and spies seeking to harm America,” said U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. “This is what the PATRIOT Act is all about—not investigating ordinary American citizens. By making the provisions of the PATRIOT Act permanent that we did today, we are permanently making it harder for our enemies to attack us again.”

H.R. 3199 permanently reauthorizes most of the provisions of the PATRIOT Act that were set to expire at the end of the year. The bill extends the information sharing provisions that allow intelligence and law enforcement officials to coordinate investigations of potential terrorist threats. It also clarifies the powers granted investigators under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

The bill contains several measures to protect civil liberties and ensure the powers of the PATRIOT Act are not abused. Among them are required reporting to the Intelligence and Judiciary committees on PATRIOT Act usage and annual reports by the Justice Department Inspector General on investigations of PATRIOT Act-based complaints.

“In the years since we first enacted the PATRIOT Act in 2001, there has not been one substantiated allegation of abuse of this law,” Hoekstra said. “But to ensure the Act is being used appropriately, and as Congress intended, the Intelligence Committee will continue to carry-out its careful and vigorous oversight of the Act on an ongoing basis.”

The bill as amended now goes to the Senate for consideration.